

Message Text

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PASS AGRICULTURE FAS FOR ANDERSON AND NOVOTNY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR PL

SUBJ: CONTINUING LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION DIFFICULTIES -- POLAND

REF: WARSAW 0588

1. DURING A CALL AT THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE ON JANUARY 18, 1977, THE AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE WAS TOLD THAT FIRST RETURNS FROM THE NATIONWIDE LIVESTOCK CENSUS CONDUCTED DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF JANUARY REVEALED THAT LIVESTOCK NUMBERS, ESPECIALLY SWINE, HAVE CONTINUED TO DECLINE. FINAL RESULTS ARE EXPECTED TO SHOW THE JANUARY POPULATION TO BE SIGNIFICANTLY BELOW THE USUAL SEASONAL DOWN CURVE. CATTLE NUMBERS ALSO APPEAR TO BE DOWN SOMEWHAT, DUE TO SHORT HAY AND SILAGE CROPS IN 1976. THE LATTER TREND WAS NOT UNEXPECTED, ACCORDING TO THIS OFFICIAL, BECAUSE OF RELATIVELY HEAVY SELLING OF CATTLE BY SMALLER FARMERS IN THE FALL.

2. THE MINAG OFFICIAL ALSO STATED THAT THE AGRICULTURAL PLENUM OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE SET FOR FRIDAY, JANUARY 21 WAS TO DEAL WITH LIVESTOCK AND OTHER AGRICULTURAL PROBLEMS, AND TO DEVELOP SOLUTIONS. (SEE REF FOR REPORT ON THIS PLENUM). THE OFFICIAL SAID THAT ALL RESOURCES WOULD BE MOBILIZED TO ENCOURAGE LIVE-
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STOCK (I.E., SWINE) PRODUCTION.

3. THE AGATT COMMENTED THAT THE JUST PUBLISHED 1976-80 PLAN CALLS FOR SWINE NUMBERS TO REACH ONLY 21-22 MILLION BY 1980, APPROXIMATELY THE SAME LEVEL AS JUNE 1975. HE INQUIRED WHETHER THIS REPRESENTED MODEST PLANNING OR SINGALED AN INTENTION TO RESTRUCTURE THE SWINE PRODUCTION ECONOMY IN POLAND. THE MINAG

OFFICIAL REPLIED THAT, ON THE CONTRARY, THE UPCOMING PLENUM WOULD TRY TO DEVELOP BETTER WAYS TO UTILIZE AVAILABLE MEANS OF PRODUCTION AND THAT PRIVATE FARMERS WILL RECEIVE INCENTIVES AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO PRODUCE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. HE STATED THAT IT IS BETTER TO SET A MODEST GOAL, AND EXCEED IT, THAN TO SET AN AMBITIOUS ONE AND FAIL TO MEET IT. FAILURE CAUSES DISLOCATION AMONG ALL OTHER PARTS OF THE PLAN, HE ADDED.

4. RETURNING TO THE CURRENT LIVESTOCK SITUATION, THE AGATT INQUIRED WHY LIVESTOCK NUMBERS AS OF JANUARY WERE STILL TRENDING DOWNWARD IN VIEW OF AMPLE SUPPLIES OF GRAIN AND POTATOES THIS YEAR. THE OFFICIAL SIDESTEPED THE QUESTION AND REPEATED THAT THE OBJECTIVE OF THE PLENUM WAS TO DEVELOP MEANS OF TURNING THE TREND AROUND.

5. COMMENT. THE REASON FOR PERSISTING DECLINE IN SWINE PRODUCTION IN POLAND IS THAT IT CONTINUES TO BE UNPROFITABLE -- AT LEAST FOR THE MANY MARGINAL PRODUCERS UPON WHOM THE COUNTRY IS SO HEAVILY DEPENDENT. THE JULY, 1976 PRODUCER PRICE INCREASES WERE NOT SUFFICIENT TO ALLOW THE SMALL GROWERS (WHO ARE HEAVILY OR TOTALLY DEPENDENT ON PURCHASES FEEDS) TO REALIZE A PROFIT RAISING PIGS, ESPECIALLY WHEN SET AGAINST SIMULTANEOUS FEED PRICE INCREASES. THE GOVERNMENT WILL EITHER HAVE TO RAISE PRODUCER PRICES AGAIN SOON OR PROVIDE BETTER FINANCIAL INCENTIVES IN THE FORM OF DIRECT OR INDIRECT SUBSIDIES. THE LATTER MAY BE MORE PALATABLE POLITICALLY IN THE SHORT RUN. POLISH SWINE GROWERS ARE EVIDENTLY ANTICIPATING SOME SORT OF FAVORABLE ACTION BY THE GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER. SOW NUMBERS ARE UP AS OF JANUARY, IN OPPOSITION TO THE TREND IN TOTAL NUMBERS, AND PIGLETS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ARE SELLING ON THE FREE MARKET FOR UP TO ZL 3000 A PAIR VS. ZL 11-1200 A PAIR IN JANUARY 1976 -- A GOOD INDICATION OF STRONG DEMAND AND SHORT SUPPLY. END COMMENT.
BROWN

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